

Mary McGrory could make words dance. She could make sentences sing and turn paragraphs into symphonies. But it was not just her writing alone that endeared so many of us to Mary. It was just Mary, such a unique individual. It is hard to describe sometimes. I guess moments like this when you know you will never have her company again, you think about the pleasant times you spent together.

Of course, I always think about Mary's annual St. Patrick's Day bash—party, if you will—at her home on Macomb Street. I didn't make every one. Sometimes I was in Iowa on the weekend. It was always on the weekend before or after St. Patrick's Day. Usually before. But I made several of them.

They were wonderful affairs. There was, of course, music, a lot of singing, and, of course, Mary McGrory's lasagna which was always kind of odd. One would think that maybe on St. Paddy's Day one would have corned beef and cabbage, an Irish dish or Irish stew, something like that, but we always had lasagna. Mary McGrory was very proud of her Irish heritage, but I always thought she felt a bit confused. While she was Irish to the core, she loved Italy and loved going to Italy, and she loved having lasagna on St. Patrick's Day.

She one time said, and I am paraphrasing because I don't remember the exact words: It is too bad the Irish could not have been born in Italy. As I said, she was sometimes, I think, a little confused whether she wanted to be more Irish or maybe more Italian, but she was Irish to the core.

Her St. Patrick's Day events were wonderful occasions. There is that wonderful song about when Irish eyes are smiling, and something about the lilt of Irish laughter, you can hear the angels sing. When Mary McGrory's eyes lit up and when she laughed, she was all Irish and you really could hear angels sing.

We always had music and songs. Everyone had to perform at Mary's St. Patrick's Day parties. Everyone had to perform. She always had people of talent there to play the piano or some musical instrument. Since I am musically challenged, and she knew this, I was always commissioned to sing. My song always thereafter was Mother McCree. I always substituted the words "Mary McGrory" for "Mother McCree" which delighted her to no end.

Mary McGrory was a clever woman. She knew how to cajole, how to sometimes even plead, ask, prod, and act terribly helpless knowing that someone would pick up her suitcase, carry her belongings, get something for her, and when that happened, and you would retrieve something or carry something for her, do something for Mary, when you finished doing it, there was this twinkle in her eye and you knew you had been had one more time. She was very clever.

Mary and my wife Ruth became fast and strong friends over gardening.

I enjoyed gardening, although I am not much of a gardener myself. I would sit and listen to them talk about gardening, or Mary would come out to the house and my wife would take her around or ask her about this flower or that flower. Of course, we would go to her place and they would go out and look at Mary's flowers and what was wrong here and what should be planted there. I always felt my job was to go down to Connecticut Avenue and pick up something to eat and come back at the appropriate time when they had finished talking about gardening.

Much has been written and much will be written about Mary's background and where she went to school and what got her into journalism, but I think more should be said about the imprint she left on so many people. She was not only a warm, wise, witty, and clever woman, she was an inspirational woman to so many people.

After you had been with Mary, or after maybe reading one of her columns, you always felt better. You felt better about the world around you. You felt better about things maybe you thought were going wrong. Maybe you were mad about something the Government was doing in one administration or another. You read her column and you felt no matter how bad things were, it was going to be okay; we were going to get through it; right would prevail; justice would triumph and people of good will would take over.

There is an old folk song with this refrain: Passing through, passing through, sometimes happy, sometimes blue, glad that I ran into you. Tell the people that you saw me passing through.

Well, Mary, you passed through and in your passing through you inspired us; you made us think; you prodded us to question, and always, to the end, gave us hope and courage that life will be better for those who come after us.

So we say goodbye to Mary McGrory, thanks for passing through, thanks for touching each of us so profoundly as you did when you passed through.

I yield the floor.

FAIRNESS IN ASBESTOS INJURY RESOLUTION (FAIR) ACT

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, earlier today I voted in favor of invoking cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 2290, the Fairness in Asbestos Injury Resolution Act. My vote was not an endorsement of S. 2290 as it was introduced in the Senate. I recognize that concerns have been raised about specific provisions of the bill, and I would consider supporting amendments to S. 2290 if the Senate has an opportunity to fully debate this legislation.

However, I am very concerned about shortcomings in the current system, and support legislating a bipartisan solution that offers a fairer, more efficient process for compensating asbestos victims. For this reason, I voted for cloture on S. 2290 in an effort to move the debate forward.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT FELIX DELGRECO

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Sgt. Felix Delgreco of the Connecticut Army National Guard, who was killed in action in Iraq on Friday, April 9, at the age of 22.

Sgt. Delgreco was the first Connecticut National Guardsman to be killed in Iraq. His unit, the C Company, 102nd Infantry, was based in Bristol and had been deployed in Kuwait since March. It had been in Baghdad for less than 3 days when Sgt. Delgreco was killed.

Felix Delgreco enlisted in the Guard in 1999, while he was still in high school. Before he went overseas this year, he had been deployed twice once on a peacekeeping effort in Bosnia in 2001, and once in 2003 to West Point for a homeland security mission.

Felix Delgreco was not ordered to go to Iraq. No one forced him to get on a plane. He volunteered. Felix Delgreco was an American patriot who wanted to serve his country and to help build a brighter future for the people of Iraq. He took it upon himself to make a difference in his community and in his world.

Felix Delgreco's friends say he was a friendly, outgoing young man who could fit in anywhere. He enjoyed writing poetry and playing music, and worked backstage during school plays at Simsbury High School. He was an Eagle Scout who took the values of leadership, service, and honor seriously. His cooking skills were well-known, both among his fellow scouts and among those who served with him in the Guard. He had dreams of one day running for President. From time to time, he would even plan out the details of his 2024 campaign with his friends.

Sgt. Delgreco was an individual whose warmth, enthusiasm, and spirit touched everyone around him. Perhaps his former scoutmaster, Richard Gugliemetti, put it best when he said, "Felix Delgreco made us all better people."

Felix Delgreco could have chosen many other paths in life. But he chose one of commitment, of duty, and of service. That was the kind of person Felix Delgreco was. And we are all forever in his debt for the tremendous sacrifice he made so that we can live in freedom and security.

I extend my deepest sympathies to Sgt. Delgreco's parents, Felix and Claire, to his entire family, and to everyone who was fortunate to know him.

TYANNA AVERY-FELDER

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise in memory of U.S. Army SP4 Tyanna Avery-Felder, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, who was killed in the line of duty in Iraq. She was 22 years old.

Specialist Avery-Felder, who served as a cook with the Army's Stryker Brigade, based in Fort Lewis, WA, died on April 6, 2004, 2 days after her convoy